

**Proposals for Remote Meetings
and effect on the Councils Constitution**

1. Introduction

This document sets out the proposals on how each committee will be held using video/audio conferencing technology and highlights a number of procedural changes to the council's rules within the constitution to allow for remote meetings. These proposals been discussed and agreed with each Group Leader.

2. Member Arrangements for Public Meetings

Members will be asked to use Zoom video conferencing technology (Zoom) to attend the meeting remotely. The Committee Services Team will provide comprehensive notes on how to install, configure and use the software and will provide guidance on meeting etiquette. Chairs of meetings will be given additional guidance on how to run the remote meeting.

The Committee Services Team will provide the necessary support at the meeting, although most virtual meetings are likely, certainly for the first few, to have a meeting facilitator on hand so that the minute taking and meeting control can be separated.

The meeting facilitator role will be to control the Zoom software and to administer the public and Member interaction, engagement and connections on the instruction of the Chair.

The attendance of members at the meeting will be recorded by the Committee Services Officer. The normal quorum requirements for meetings as set out in the constitution will also apply to a remote meeting.

There are times when council meetings are not open to the public, when confidential, or "exempt" issues (as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972) are under consideration – commonly known as Part B items on the agenda. When Part B items on the agenda are being discussed the live feed to members of the public/press will be paused.

3. Public Participation in Public Meetings

The normal deadlines will apply for members of the public register to speak or asking questions at council meetings. These deadlines are detailed in the council's constitution.

Members of the public attending a meeting to exercise a right to speak will be asked to use Zoom to attend the meeting remotely or be given the option to provide written representation.

A Committee Services Officer will discuss with members of the public how best they can make their representations to the meeting. Members of the public will be allowed to join the meeting remotely and their participation will be subject to the same procedures outlined in the council's constitution.

The Committee Services Officer or meeting facilitator will be able to mute the member of the public once they have spoken, and remove them from the remote meeting on the instruction of the Chair, in order to maintain the good administration of the meeting or to retain order.

4. Public/Press Participation in Public Meetings

Remote access for members of the public and Members who are not attending to participate in the meeting together with press facilities, will be provided through the council's YouTube Channel. Details of how to view the meeting remotely will be published on the agenda of each public meeting.

5. Proposals for each meeting

5.1) Full Council

The proposal for the Annual Council meeting in May is to run a politically balanced slimmed-down meeting, to aid the meeting's efficiency, to be held remotely using Zoom to agree core business including the representation of political groups on committees and electing the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. The revised membership for this meeting as agreed by all Group Leaders is detailed below.

Committee	Existing membership	Agreed reduced membership
Council	44 Members (Including one vacancy)	19 Members 10 Labour 8 Conservative 1 Independent

Appendix Two - Proposals for Remote Meetings

The Mayor has agreed that we will not have the 'pomp and ceremony' of the Annual Meeting focusing instead on the core business such as above. There are a number of other items of business that were due to be considered at Annual Council such as the presentation of scrolls and badges to honorary Freeman and Alderman and the community awards, that will now not take place. It is intended that a subsequent civic event takes place, if social distancing guidance allows, for the presentation of these honours and awards.

It is proposed that until further notice all future full Council meetings will also be held with a reduced number of members at or above the quorate number of the meeting (11) with the composition being politically balanced. This will enable the smooth and efficient operation of the meeting.

5.2) Cabinet

Cabinet meetings will continue to take place using Zoom with all members of the cabinet in attendance (remotely).

5.3) Overview Scrutiny (including Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee)

Overview Scrutiny Committee meetings will continue to take place using Zoom with all members of the committee in attendance (remotely).

The review programmes of the committee will be suspended (postponed). The reviews that were being undertaken by this committee were:

- Maritime Strategy (In progress)
- Street Cleanliness, Littering and Fly-tipping

Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee will continue with the next scheduled meeting in October 2020. This will take place using Zoom, subject to the prevailing situation, government guidance and sufficient business to be considered. All members of the committee will be in attendance (remotely).

The review programmes of the committee will be suspended (postponed). The reviews that were being undertaken by this committee were:

- Knife and Violent Youth Crime (In progress)
- Town Centre Crime

5.4) Planning Committee

The Planning committee will meet remotely using Zoom with all committee members present. Officers will be using Zoom to participate in the meeting and assist with visual presentation of plans.

Registered objectors and supporters of applications will be able to take part in the meeting using Zoom or provide written representation that can be read out.

5.5) Licensing Committee and Licensing Panels

Licensing Committee will continue with the next scheduled meeting in October 2020. This will take place using Zoom, subject to the prevailing situation government guidance and sufficient business to be considered. All members of the committee will be in attendance (remotely).

Ad-hoc Licensing Panels, made up of three councillors drawn from the main committee, will be called as necessary to deal with applications for Premises Licence Reviews, where there are unresolved representations, and to consider officer reports concerning serious disciplinary matter against individual licence holders. These will take place using Zoom with registered speakers able to take part in the meeting using Zoom or provide written representation.

In terms of disciplinary issues, the officer scheme of delegation provides authority to the Director (Communities) to take action to protect public safety, prior to the matter being heard by a panel where it is necessary. If necessary and appropriate, the Director (Communities) will take action, and the application will be deferred until a suitable date.

5.6) Finance and Audit Committee

Finance and Audit Committee meetings will continue to take place using Zoom with all members of the committee in attendance (remotely).

5.7) Cabinet Sub-Committees

The committees are advisory in their nature and will continue to meet, subject to business forthcoming, using Zoom with their full membership. These committees are:

- Commercial Services
- Community & Leisure
- Housing Services
- Operational Services
- Performance & Administration
- Strategic Environment

5.8) Working Parties

The scheduled meetings of the Climate Change Corporate Working Group will continue where possible and this will take place using the GoToMeeting software as this committee has no requirement to be broadcast publically. The next scheduled meeting of this group is in October 2020.

5.9) Third-party meetings/ Joint Arrangements

It is intended that the following committees will continue to meet remotely using video/audio conferencing technology with their full membership, subject to agreement with the third parties involved.

- Gravesham Joint Transportation Board (Kent County Council)
- Parish Chairs Meeting (Parish Chairs)
- South Thames Gateway Building Control Joint Committee (All partner Councils)

6. Meetings Schedule

The first three months of the 2020/21 meeting schedule would therefore be as follows.*

Month	Scheduled meetings	Changes proposed
May	Annual Council Planning Committee Joint Transportation Board Parish Chairs Meeting	Reduced attendance Held remotely with full membership Held remotely with full membership Held remotely with full membership
June	Cabinet Commercial Services Community & Leisure Housing Services Operational Services Finance and Audit Performance & Administration Overview Scrutiny Planning Committee STGBC Joint Committee Strategic Environment Full Council Cabinet	Held remotely with full membership Held remotely with full membership Held remotely with full membership Held remotely with full membership Held remotely with full membership Held remotely with full membership Held remotely with full membership Held remotely with full membership Held remotely with full membership Held remotely with full membership Held remotely with full membership Reduced attendance Held remotely with full membership
July	Overview Scrutiny Finance and Audit Planning Committee	Held remotely with full membership Held remotely with full membership Held remotely with full membership

*In accordance with the constitution, all meetings will be held subject to sufficient business on the agenda.

7. Procedural Changes to the Councils Constitution

There are a number of procedural changes that we need to be made to the Procedural Rules of the Council's Constitution.

Reference	Change	Reason
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Annex 2: Procedural Rules

Paragraph 5.2.1 (Page 8)	'..Chair of the Cabinet/Committee <i>'or member nominated by them'</i> will move that'	For Full Council meetings held with reduced numbers the committee chairs may not present at the meeting
Paragraphs 5.2.2, 5.2.3, 5.2.4, 5.2.7, 5.2.8, 5.2.11 (Pages 8-9)	Insertion of <i>'or member nominated by them'</i> after each mention of the word 'Chair'.	For Full Council meetings held with reduced numbers the committee chairs may not present at the meeting
Paragraph 5.2.6a (Page 9)	a Member <i>'or member nominated by them'</i> wishing to speak	For Full Council meetings held with reduced numbers a member may wish to speak on a matter but may not be present at the meeting. This enables another member to raise the issue on their behalf.
Paragraph 5.2.10 (Page 9)	a Member <i>'present at the meeting'</i> shall not be prevented from participating in the debate..	For Full Council meetings held with reduced numbers a member may remotely view the meeting but unable to participate at the meeting.
Paragraph 8.2.3 (Page 11)	The Annual Meeting will be held in the Woodville Halls, Gravesend <i>or remotely</i> commencing at 7.00 p.m <i>'or earlier.'</i>	Allows for a remote meeting to be held and to be held earlier if required
Paragraph 8.3 (Page 11)	Ordinary Meetings will be held at the Civic Centre, Gravesend <i>or remotely</i> commencing at 7.30 p.m <i>'or earlier.'</i>	Allows for a remote meeting to be held and to be held earlier if required
Paragraph 8.4 (Page 11)	Extraordinary Meetings will be held at the Civic Centre, Gravesend <i>or remotely</i> commencing at 7.30 p.m <i>'or earlier.'</i>	Allows for a remote meeting to be held and to be held earlier if required
Paragraph 8.5 (Page 12)	Such meetings will normally be held at the Civic Centre, Gravesend <i>or remotely</i> commencing at 7.30 p.m	Allows for a remote meeting to be held

Appendix Two - Proposals for Remote Meetings

Reference	Change	Reason
Annex 2: Procedural Rules		
Paragraph 17.5.1 (Page 20)	'..Chair of the Cabinet or a Committee ' <i>or member nominated by them</i> '"	For Full Council meetings held at quorate the committee chairs may not present at the meeting
Paragraphs 17.6.3 (Pages 21)	In the case of the Chair of the Cabinet or a Committee ' <i>or member nominated by them</i> '	For Full Council meetings held at quorate the committee chairs may not present at the meeting
Paragraph 17.12.1 (Page 25)	A Member ' <i>present at the meeting</i> '..	For Full Council meetings held with reduced numbers a member maybe remotely viewing the meeting but unable to participate at the meeting.
Paragraph 17.13.1 (Page 25)	A Member ' <i>present at the meeting</i> '..	For Full Council meetings held with reduced numbers a member maybe remotely viewing the meeting but unable to participate at the meeting.
Paragraph 22 (Page 27)	This rule will be suspended for remote meetings	Members are unable to sign the attendance register if a meeting is held remotely.
Paragraph 24.1 (Page 28)	This rule will be suspended for remote meetings	Members will not be expected to stand if a meeting is held remotely.
Paragraph 24.2 (Page 30)	This rule will be suspended for remote meetings	The Mayor will not be expected to stand if a meeting is held remotely.
Paragraph 24.4.3 (Page 29)	..the Mayor may authorise that Member's removal from the room ' <i>or remote meeting</i> '	Updated to allow for remote meetings
Paragraph 25.1 (Page 29)	If they continue to interrupt, the Mayor will order their removal from the meeting place.	Updated to allow for remote meetings
Paragraph 25.2 (Page 29)	This rule will be suspended for remote meetings	Paragraph 25.1 provides sufficient ability to deal with a disturbance in a remote meeting

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Annex 2.2: Access to Information Procedure Rules

Paragraph 7 (Page 33)	This rule will be suspended for remote meetings	Copies will be available on the website and can be sent by post upon request.
Paragraph 11 (Page 33)	This rule will be suspended for remote meetings	Copies will be available on the website and can be sent by post upon request.